

Article - Family Law

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§5–1404.

(a) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, the court shall hold a trial on termination of parental rights not later than 180 days after an answer to the complaint is filed.

(2) Unless both parents agree otherwise or the court finds that it is in the best interest of the child to proceed, if a criminal proceeding involving the same underlying facts is pending at the time an action to terminate parental rights under this subtitle is filed, or if a criminal proceeding involving the same underlying facts is commenced after an action to terminate parental rights under this subtitle is filed, the court may stay all further proceedings in the action to terminate parental rights until the criminal proceeding is resolved.

(b) In an action to terminate parental rights under this subtitle:

(1) the respondent may refuse to testify or to offer evidence; and

(2) no adverse inference may be drawn from the respondent's refusal to testify or to offer evidence.

(c) A parent's testimony and any other information obtained from the parent in a proceeding under this subtitle and any information directly or indirectly derived from the parent's testimony or the other information are inadmissible as evidence in a criminal proceeding against that parent if:

(1) the criminal proceeding involves the same underlying facts; and

(2) the evidence is offered for a purpose other than impeachment.

(d) The court, on its own motion or on petition, and for good cause shown, may order that court records of a proceeding under this subtitle be sealed or may require that filings be submitted and maintained in a form that protects the privacy of the parents and the child.

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